

The Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

The Well-Known Novelist and the Creator of the "Craig Kennedy" Stories

Presented in Collaboration With the Pathé Players and the Eclectic Film Company

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SYNOPSIS.

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders and other crimes. The principal clue to the criminal is the warning letter which is sent the victims, signed "The Clutching Hand." The latest victim is the mysterious assassin, is Taylor Dodge, the insurance president. The police try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy accomplishes is told by his friend, Jameson, a newspaper man. After many fruitless attempts to put Elaine and Craig Kennedy out of the way the Clutching Hand is at last found to be none other than Perry Bennett, Elaine's lawyer and the man she is engaged to marry. Bennett flees to the den of one of his Chinese criminals. The Chinaman forces from Bennett the secret of the whereabouts of \$75,000. Then he gives the lawyer a position which will suspend animation for months. Kennedy reaches Bennett's side just after he has lost consciousness.

TWENTY-FIRST EPISODE

THE EAR IN THE WALL.

Elaine sat in the library reading one morning when her maid Marie entered, carrying a long pasteboard box, daintily tied with ribbon.

"Some flowers for you, Miss Elaine, I think," she said handing the box to her mistress.

Marie left the room, and Elaine, after contemplating for a moment in keen anticipation what she thought at first was a gift from Craig Kennedy, opened the box. There lay a splendid bunch of long-stemmed red and white roses.

Nestling in the green leaves was a little white note. She picked it up expectantly and tore it open.

Instantly, however, her face blanched. Instead of a billet doux, it was the most fearsome threat yet which the savage Chinese master criminal, Wu Pang, had sent in the vengeance of vendetta which he had sworn on account of the loss of the Clutching Hand's millions.

Elaine had scarcely time to exclaim at the dire meaning when Kennedy himself entered.

"Good morning," he greeted cheerfully, cutting the greeting short as he caught the horrified expression on her pretty face. "Why, what's the matter?"

"Elaine was too terrified even yet to speak. All she could do was to hand him the note."

"The first victim shall be Craig Kennedy or your aunt. You may choose. Place the red roses in the window for your lover, the white for the silver-haired one."

At this and appeared the mysterious sign of the serpent, darting from his tongue a death more than figurative. "What shall I do?" she appealed.

Craig did not answer directly. He could not. Thoughtfully he walked to the window and gazed out. There was only a dirty, bent cripple standing by the corner selling papers to pedestrians.

Kennedy's forehead wrinkled in thought. He turned and walked back from the window. Mechanically he picked up his hat and cane, then laid them on the table.

"I must look into this at once," he said, lifting the flowers and putting them back into the box carefully, as if he expected trouble to come of the affair.

"You—you'll be very careful," Elaine pleaded Elaine, as they left the library and went into the hall. "I will be—for you," he repeated, with a reassuring smile. "Oh—I forgot my cane."

Quickly he returned to the library, leaving her standing in the hallway. There he had purposely left his stick on the table beside the flowers. He selected some from the bunch of red roses and hastily stuck them in a vase and placed the vase on the window sill. Then he picked up the cane and rejoined Elaine in the hall.

Outside the Dodge house the dirty, bent cripple looked about cautiously for the corner of his eye.

He paused as if he had caught sight of a mendicant officer bearing down on him. There on the window sill of the library was a vase of red roses. Hastily he shuffled off on his way.

As fast as his supposedly bent body could straighten itself safely out he hurried downstairs with one idea—to reach the secret apartment of Wu Pang, the serpent.

Wu, Long Sin and several other henchmen were gathered about a table which was a long oblong oak table, the cover, which was open, was stenciled on the inside two flat, spoked, silver-covered wire. At each end of the box was placed an ordinary size battery, and in a compartment between, besides switches and knobs, were what looked like the heads of wireless operators.

"This," said Wu, holding up a little black disk about as large as a watch, "is the face of the little devil's little mechanical eavesdropper—the telephone—this ear in the wall. By its aid we shall learn all about our enemies, where to strike, when to—"

He stopped short as a servant en-

tered. Almost automatically, at a mere sign from Wu, all the rest of the group disappeared behind screens.

"Bring him in," ordered Wu as the servant announced that a visitor was outside. Then, as the cripple entered, spryly enough now, he added: "Oh—it is you. Well—anything to report?"

"Red roses," was all that the ex-beggar in his awe at the fierce Chinaman could find words to blurt out.

"We nodded. 'It is well. I will call you again when I need you. You may go,' he instructed."

No sooner had he gone than the others reappeared from behind their screens and other hiding places as silently as they had gone.

"You will all follow me," directed Wu, gathering together the paraphernalia and shutting the box. "Here, Tom Ling, carry that box for me—carefully, too."

A moment later Wu left the secret apartment, followed by his henchmen, splitting up inconspicuously as they made their way upstairs.

I had come into the laboratory and, not finding Kennedy, had decided to wait there for him.

Perhaps half an hour later he came rushing in, his face clouded with thought and beads of perspiration standing out on his forehead.

"What's the trouble?" I asked anxiously.

"Trouble enough," he replied, flinging off his hat and coat and throwing on his smock, as he related disjointedly between whistles what had happened. "And now I'm going to prepare for the attack, whatever it may be," he went on, going over briskly to the laboratory table. "Where's that nitrate—oh, here it is."

For the next few minutes he was busily mixing several chemicals while I watched him curiously in silent admiration.

When he had finished he poured one liquid from a tube into an atomizer, then another of the liquids which he had made into a flask.

"Walter," he asked, getting ready to go out and indicating to me to do the same, "I wish you'd bring along that rug over there by my sink."

I placed the rug before our door and he emptied almost half of the contents of the flask on it. Then he entered the laboratory again, taking care not to step on the rug, but over it.

Meanwhile Wu Pang and his henchmen had proceeded to the basement of our apartment house.

First Wu entered the dark cellar cautiously and beckoned to Long Sin and the other Chinamen to follow. One of his followers carried the Big Six detectaphone, which he placed on an old rickety table which the janitor, Jensen, sometimes used.

We opened the oak case and began to look about for a place to install the little listening ear by wires that would run up from this cellar hiding place to our apartment above.

"Ugh! Look!" cried one of the Chinamen, pointing toward a corner of the cellar wall.

Wu turned. There was a rat which had run out of a hole, had seen them and scampered quickly across the floor and away safely.

If interested Wu and he walked over to the rathole and examined it.

"Wait here," he ordered quickly, leaving his men on guard in the cellar.

It was not very many minutes later that Wu returned to the cellar with a large cardboard box under his arm.

"No one has gone in, master," reported one of the Chinamen.

Wu nodded and turned to another who had been engaged in enlarging the rathole in the wall.

"Does it run upstairs?" he asked.

"Yes, master," returned the other.

"Then wait here," ordered Wu, taking up the detectaphone transmitter, the spool of wire and the box.

He left the cellar stealthily and a few minutes later reached the upper hall, which at the time happened to be deserted. Somehow he had obtained a skeleton key which fitted our lock, and with its aid he entered our apartment.

Quickly he looked about the room, then he turned to the corner where the corner of the room was as that nearest to the door.

He placed the transmitter of the detectaphone in the corner, and drew the wire from the spool and ran it up the wall.

Next he placed the spool of wire into the pasteboard box, and drew the wire from the spool and ran it up the wall.

This ferret worked rather haphazardly around his harness Wu attempted to draw the wire from the spool and ran it up the wall.

Then he reached the pocket and drew out a rat. As he held them, one in each hand, he let the ferret get a good look and smell of the rat as it squeaked in fright.

Finally he pushed the rat into the hole in the plaster which he had made, and an instant later, loosed the ferret after it, as if on a leash of wire. There Wu stood paying out the wire as the ferret scampered after the scared rat.

Wu faithfully paid out the wire, hoping for the result he had calculated carefully. At last the tugging at the spool of wire ceased. Three sharp jerks told him he had succeeded. Then Wu set the transmitter in the hole in the wall close up to the baseboard, which he had replaced.

Perhaps half an hour after our return into the laboratory after Kennedy had soaked the mat, he decided after much deliberation to attempt to carry the war into the enemy's country. We left the laboratory, he to seek some clue, I to go down to the Star, where I had a little work to do.

Kennedy had scarcely bidden me good-by and turned out of the campus on the avenue, when he happened to see a face in the crowd which interested him.

It was that of the woman who had posed as Elaine—Innocent Inez. He paused a moment as she went by and gazed after her. She had not seen him. This was too good an opportunity to miss. He turned and followed her to the Mandarin, a chop suey joint.

"Is the master in?" she whispered to the proprietor.

"No," he replied, "but Long Sin is in the other place."

A short time afterward, as they still talked, Kennedy after pausing outside the chop suey joint, decided to enter.

While Inez and Sam were engaged in earnest conversation he sat down at a table near by with his back to them.

As nearly as he could make out, there was a room somewhere, which was at least one headquarters of Long Sin, if not Wu himself. But it was too risky to remain.

Around on Park row again, he stopped in a drug store where there was a telephone booth and called up the agency whose operatives he had frequently employed on routine matters like shadowing.

"Can you send Chase down here immediately?" he asked, giving the address of the Dodge house that Elaine re-

turned to the library, still thinking about the note which she had received with the flowers. As she entered she hardly noticed that both Marie and Jennings were there.

She had scarcely awakened from her day dream in which she was walking, as it were, when her quick eye caught sight of the vase of red roses on the window sill.

"Who put those flowers there?" she demanded of the astounded butler and maid, as she dashed them to the floor.

Neither of them, naturally, knew a thing about it. Nor did Aunt Josephine, who happened to pass through the room at the moment.

"Oh, I must see him—I must," cried Elaine excitedly, as she hurried out for her wraps. "Who knows what may have happened?"

We returned to our apartment, chagrined, after our flat failure to capture either Long Sin or even get evidence against Wu.

As we entered the apartment, Craig dropped into a chair, scowling to himself. I watched him in gloomy sympathy. Suddenly his face brightened.

"What do you think they—"

He cut me short with his finger on his lips, pantomimic silence. Instead of answering me he wrote on a slip of paper and handed it to me:

"There must be a detectaphone in this room. Talk about the weather—anything—while I locate it."

Finally Craig went over to his desk and took out a small piece of apparatus.

He placed a peculiar telephonelike contrivance attached to one end of it up to his ear, he adjusted the magnet and carried the thing carefully about the room.

"I've found the hangout," he cried excitedly. "It's over that restaurant. You go in by the side entrance and upstairs. I got far as the door of the den, saw Long Sin and that getting ready for an opium jag."

"Fine work, Chase," complimented Craig, seizing the receiver. "Hello—police headquarters? Connect me with the Elizabeth street station, please."

He waited impatiently. "Sergeant," he shouted, "this is Kennedy, Craig Kennedy. You remember I dropped you a few minutes ago and told you I was on the trail of something. Well, I've got it. The place is over the Mandarin. Have it raided at once and we'll get them. Not the Mandarin—the side entrance, one flight up."

He hung up the receiver. "Come, Walter," he cried. "You and Chase can help me now."

While we hurried downtown the police were being detailed for the raid and the patrol wagon was still waiting for the squad.

We drove up in a taxicab just as the wagon swung around the corner. Almost as soon as we, the police were at the side door. Two of them rushed the Mandarin and arrested the taciturn proprietor. The rest battered down the door of the room.

It was bare.

As we looked about in astounded chagrin, I saw a sign on the wall. "Look—what's that?" I exclaimed.

It read mockingly, "FOR RENT."

But underneath was that mystic coiled reptile, ready to spring, with fangs extended—the sign of the serpent.

Wu Pang had already plugged in the six receivers of the detectaphone and, though we did not know it, was eagerly listening with the others down in the cellar as Kennedy gave his orders for the raid.

"Tom," muttered Wu, "you must get down there at once."

Inez and Long Sin had scarcely had time to enjoy half a dozen luxurious whiffs before the secret rapping sounded at the door. Long Sin opened it and Tom, usually imperturbable, almost rushed in.

"The master—has learned—the police—raid—here," he announced, breathlessly.

Wu Pang had outwitted us and saved both Long Sin and Inez by the marvelous little eavesdropper.

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